



For more information contact:
DEC- Lori Severino, 518-402-8000
PBA- Matt Davison 905-994-3677; 716-884-8748

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DEC AND PBA TO MONITOR AIR AT PEACE BRIDGE

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority (PBA) today announced they will conduct air monitoring at the Peace Bridge to assess local air quality. The monitoring will assess air quality prior to prospective renovations as well as after improvements to the plaza, which are designed to reduce congestion, are complete. Monitoring is expected to start in August 2012.

“DEC is pleased to partner with the Peace Bridge Authority to determine how reducing traffic congestion affects air quality near the Peace Bridge,” DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said. “This data will not only help us understand the air quality impacts of the Peace Bridge corridor, but also enhance our understanding of the air pollution burdens present on Buffalo’s West Side.”

“The PBA is sincere in our commitment to evaluating the air quality situation at the Peace Bridge and is pleased to support this monitoring initiative,” said PBA Chairman Sam Hoyt. “We’re confident that this work will demonstrate both the port’s continued compliance with state emissions regulations and our continued focus on environmental stewardship issues. We thank Assemblyman Sean Ryan, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, Council Member David Rivera, and many other key local elected officials who have strongly advocated for monitoring activity.”

Two monitoring locations will be selected with one upwind of the Peace Bridge, in or near Front Park, and one downwind on the east side of Busti Avenue near the abandoned Episcopal Church Home site. Each location will have equipment to measure fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and black carbon. Sulfur and metal content will also be assessed from the PM_{2.5} samples. This monitoring will be done in accordance with all standard air monitoring protocols. A meteorological station will be installed at one of the sites.

Monitoring will take place for six months prior to prospective renovations and construction activity, and for six months after renovations are complete. Fine particulate matter, PM_{2.5}, and black carbon will be monitored continuously. This data will be available to the public on DEC’s website. Continuous data provides information that can be used to correlate with other observables such as traffic volume and time of day.

(MORE)

This monitoring will allow DEC and PBA to assess the air quality impacts of the Peace Bridge corridor before and after prospective renovations and improvements to the U.S. plaza area.

“With the amount of traffic that the Peace Bridge sees, it is very important for the surrounding neighborhoods that the State ensures that all vehicles meet or exceed air quality standards. This new air monitoring initiative announced today will not only ensure vehicle compliance but will begin to study trends for future requirements,” said NYS Senator Mark Grisanti, Senate Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee. “I applaud this effort to monitor the air quality in the Peace Bridge corridor.”

“As the economic bond between Western New York and Southern Ontario grows stronger, the Peace Bridge will remain a critical contributor to sustained economic success,” said NYS Senator Tim Kennedy. “With this new monitoring system, we’ll now be able to ensure the Peace Bridge maintains the environmental standards that Western New Yorkers expect and deserve. I commend the DEC and PBA for taking action to monitor and improve air quality.”

“I’m very pleased that the DEC has agreed to my request to install air monitors and to increase idling enforcement at the Peace Bridge,” said NYS Assemblyman Sean Ryan. “Putting air monitors in place and getting conservation officers on the ground to enforce idling regulations will go a long way toward improving the health of Buffalo’s west side residents. It’s good to see that the PBA and the DEC have stepped up to the plate to improve conditions at the Peace Bridge.”

“My colleagues and I on the Buffalo Common Council asked, among other requests, for air monitoring at the Peace Bridge plaza back in December and again last month,” said Buffalo Common Council Member David Rivera. “It’s good to hear that it will begin shortly. I hope consideration will be given to our other requests as well.”

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